

(WASHINGTON) - U.S. Representative Chet Edwards has secured funding for important national defense projects at the Waco VA, L-3 Communications, and Baylor University under the final 2010 Defense Appropriations bill, which passed the House Wednesday 395 to 34. The final bill is expected to pass the Senate and be signed into law this month.

Edwards, chairman of the Military Construction and Veterans Affairs Appropriations Subcommittee said, *"These priority programs will strengthen our nation's defense, and support jobs and economic growth in Central Texas. I will continue working with local leaders in McLennan County to make our area a major center for good-paying defense jobs that contribute to our nation's security."*

Edwards secured \$2.4 million for a joint Waco VA Hospital -Ft. Hood-Texas A&M health research program that will examine the underlying causes of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). Edwards created the program in 2006 and has secured \$8.3 million total for this project to date.

"The Waco VA and Ft. Hood are uniquely positioned to conduct world-class research with the Department of Defense to find improved treatments and cures for veterans suffering from mental illness and post traumatic stress disorder. The close proximity of Fort Hood and the Waco VA hospital, which is a nationally recognized center of excellence for veterans' mental health care cannot be matched anywhere else in the country," **said Edwards, a senior member of the House Appropriations Committee.**□

Waco's largest private employer, L-3 Communications, will receive \$5 million requested by Edwards to fund a Technology Integration Lab at L-3 where new technologies for the EP-3E spy planes can be "pre-tested" before installation. These aircraft are heavily engaged collecting intelligence in theater and this will dramatically decrease the time they must be pulled away from their missions in Iraq, Afghanistan and elsewhere to receive important systems upgrades.

"This research program will help us increase the intelligence gathering capabilities of our Navy EP-3 surveillance planes, which are vital intelligence tools that protect our troops on the battlefields of Iraq and Afghanistan," **said Edwards.**

Baylor will receive \$400,000 added to the bill by Edwards to help military families cope with the stresses of loved ones serving in combat. The project will involve research into the poorly understood aspects of the impact of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) on the families of soldiers, specifically the long term impact on older veterans with sons and daughters in combat. The study would be done in conjunction with the VA Center for Excellence for Research on Returning War Veterans (COE).

"Military families are the unsung heroes of our nation's defense," said Edwards. "Ensuring they have the support they need to cope with the stress of their loved ones' deployment and return to civilian life is the least we can do to honor their service and sacrifice."

Dr. Truell Hyde, Vice Provost for Research at Baylor University said, *"With funding secured in the Defense Appropriation bill by Congressman Edwards, Baylor University and the VISN 17 Center for Excellence for Research on Returning War Veterans will address the correlation between coping strategies within families and the impact of the adjustment of soldiers returning from combat. This project will also look to more effectively target assistance for military personnel -- both before and after deployment."*

Baylor will also receive \$800,000 added to the bill by Edwards for research targeted toward extending the life of legacy avionics systems, specifically the F/A-18 aircraft. The extension of existing avionics systems will allow the deferral of upgrades that could save the Department of Defense millions of dollars.

Dr. Truell Hyde said, *"The funds secured by Congressman Edwards will support the purchase of necessary equipment to advance the research at Baylor Avionics Research and Development (BARD) laboratory, which will help meet the analytical needs of aerospace and aviation companies in central Texas. With this equipment, BARD will be able to conduct specific research related to extending the life of avionics systems, as well as reducing costs and improving the performance of aeronautical systems. Additionally, this project will support new jobs in the greater Waco area and better prepare students for employment in the region's avionics industry."*

